IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1, 7 and 13 as follows, in which deleted terms are indicated with strikethrough and/or double brackets, and added terms are indicated with underscoring. Please cancel claim 8 without prejudice and without dedication or abandonment of the subject matter thereof. Also, please add new claim 26 as shown below.

1. (Currently amended) A method of manufacturing an open porous body for use in a slip casting mold for slip casting a powder material, comprising the steps of:

stirring a mixture of an epoxy compound having at least one epoxy ring in one molecule, a hardener for reacting with the epoxy compound to harden the epoxy compound, a filler for developing self water absorption capability and mold releasability, and water into an O/W-type emulsion slurry;

casting the emulsion slurry into a mold impermeable to water; and

hardening the emulsion slurry in the mold while containing the water,

wherein said filler has an average particle diameter ranging 1μm to 20μm, and said hardener is primarily composed of 1-5 wt % of a product produced by a reaction between monomer fatty acid and chain-like fatty primary polyamine and 99 – 95wt % of a product produced by a reaction between polymer fatty acid and chain-like fatty primary polyamine.

2. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said epoxy compound comprises a glycidyl epoxy resin.

3. (Original) A method according to claim 2, wherein said glycidyl epoxy resin comprises a bisphenol epoxy resin.

4. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said hardener contains a polyamide resin.

5. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein said filler has an average particle diameter ranging from 0.3 μm to 8 μm.

6. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 5, wherein said filler is primarily composed of a hydraulic material.

7. (Withdrawn-currently amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein said ~~filler has an average particle diameter ranging from 1 μm to 20 μm, said~~ mixture further comprising a product produced by a reaction between chain-like fatty primary polyamine and glycidyl ether having two or more glycidyl groups in one molecule.

8. Cancelled.

9. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein said filler is primarily composed of one of aluminum hydroxide and hydraulic material.

10. (Withdrawn) A method according to claim 9, wherein said filler is primarily composed of a hydraulic material, and said hydraulic material comprises at least one material selected from the group consisting of alumina cement, Portland cement, mixed cement primarily composed of Portland cement, and hemihydrate gypsum.

11. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said filler has a grain size distribution selected such that an integrated sieve volume of particle diameters which are 1/4 of the Rosin--Rammler's absolute size constant is ≤ 30 %.

12. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said mixture further comprises a dilatancy reducing agent.

13. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein said emulsion slurry is prepared by mixing the epoxy compound and water into a mixture and stirring the mixture, then adding the filler to the mixture and stirring the mixture, and then adding the hardener to the mixture and stirring the mixture.

14. (Withdrawn) A slip casting mold for slip casting a powdery material, having a water absorption layer comprising the open porous body manufactured by the method according to claim 1.

15. (Withdrawn) A slip casting mold according to claim 14, mainly composed of the water absorption layer which is solid.

16. (Withdrawn) A slip casting mold according to claim 14, further comprising a backing layer of plastic or hydraulic material mounted on a reverse side of the water absorption layer which provides a molding surface.

17. (Withdrawn) A slip casting mold according to claim 14, further comprising air grooves defined inside or in the reverse side of the water absorption layer for passing air and water to the water absorption layer.

18. (Withdrawn) A slip casting mold according to claim 14, further comprising

a coarse porous layer disposed on the reverse side of the water absorption layer and having a pipe extending out of the slip casting mold for passing water and air therethrough to the water absorption layer.

19. (Withdrawn) A slip casting mold according to claim 18, wherein coarse porous layer has an average pore diameter of at least 100 μm.

20. (Withdrawn) A slip casting mold according to claim 14, further comprising a cassette case detachably mounted on a reverse side of the water absorption layer which provides a molding surface.

21. (Withdrawn) A slip casting mold according to claim 20, further comprising air grooves defined in a boundary surface between the water absorption layer and the cassette case for passing air and water to the water absorption layer.

22. (Withdrawn) A slip casting mold according to claim 20, wherein said cassette case has air grooves defined in a boundary surface between the water absorption layer and the cassette case for passing air and water to the water absorption layer.

23. (Withdrawn) A slip casting mold according to claim 20, wherein said cassette case includes a coarse porous layer at least in a boundary surface between the water absorption layer and the cassette case, said cassette case having a pipe connected to said coarse porous layer and extending out of the slip casting mold for passing air and water to the water absorption layer.

24. (Withdrawn) A slip casting mold according to claim 14, for slip casting the powdery material under a slip casting pressure which comprises a pressure selected from at least one of a) a slurry head pressure, b) a suction vacuum applied to the water absorption layer, and c) a pressure of at most 0.3 MPa applied directly to the slurry.

25. (Withdrawn) A slip casting mold according to claim 14 for slip casting one of ceramic whiteware sanitary earthenware, fine ceramics, and a powder metallurgy product.

26. (New) A method according to claim 1, wherein a small quantity of coarse particles having particle diameters greater than the Rosin-Rammler's absolute size constant is added to said filler to establish a sharp grain size distribution of filler particles with at least two peaks.